

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 10: Cancelled

11. (currently amended) An apparatus for introducing gas into a liquid, comprising:

a rigid profiled support member ~~1,21,31~~, wherein said support member defines a space and is provided with at least one recessed area ~~11,23,33~~; and

an elastic tube ~~2,22,32~~ disposed on said profiled support member, wherein said elastic tube is provided with elastically expandable slits, wherein compressed air or gas is guided exclusively between the profiled support member and the tube, wherein the compressed air or gas is not guided into the space defined by the profiled support member, and wherein the compressed air or gas is adapted to escape into the liquid, in the form of bubbles, through said slits when they are expanded.

12. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said at least one recessed area ~~11,23,33~~ extends substantially over an entire length of said profiled support member ~~1,21,31~~.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, which is adapted to be disposed on a base ~~7~~ of a receptacle that contains water, or a body of water that is to be aerated, and wherein said at least one recessed area ~~11~~ is disposed on an upper side ~~9~~ of said profiled support member ~~4~~.

14. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said profiled support member ~~24~~ has a circular or nearly circular cross-sectional configuration, wherein said elastic tube ~~22~~ encases said profiled support member ~~24~~,

and wherein said at least one recessed area 23 is disposed on an underside of the profiled support member 24.

15. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said profiled support member 34 has a circular or nearly circular cross-sectional configuration, wherein said elastic tube 32 encases said profiled support member 34, and wherein recessed areas 33 are disposed on sides of said profiled support member 34.

16. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said elastic tube 22, 32 has ends that are secured via clamps to said profiled support member 21, 34, wherein fillers 24, 34 are disposed in said at least one recessed area 23, 33 on a longitudinal portion of said profiled support member 21, 34 on which said clamps are disposed, and wherein said fillers 24, 34 restore an outer contour of said profiled support member 21, 34 to a shape that said profiled support member would have without said at least one recessed area.

17. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said fillers 24, 34 restore the outer contour of said profiled support member 21, 34 to a circular shape.

18. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said fillers 24, 34 are made of rubber or a rubber-like material similar to rubber.

19. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said elastic tube 2, 22, 32, at least at one end thereof, is secured to said profiled support member 4, 21, 34 via clamps, and wherein in the region of said clamps, said profiled support member has no recessed area and an outer perimeter of said profiled support member corresponds at least to an inner diameter of said elastic tube.

20. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein in the region of its securement to said profiled support member 4, 21, 34, said elastic

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tube ~~2,22,32~~ has no elastically expandable slits.